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PROVINCE HOUSE

PROHIBITORY LIQUOR LAW.

**THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED DURING THE SITTING OF THE
PROVINCIAL
TEMPERANCE CONVENTION,**

IN THE TEMPERANCE HALL, HALIFAX,

On the 23rd February, 1854.

The Members of the House of Assembly and of the
Legislative Council being present by invitation.

BY THE REV. J. M. CRAMP, D. D.
G. W. P. of the Sons of Temperance of Nova Scotia.

HALIFAX, N. S.

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PROHIBITORY LIQUOR LAW.

ADDRESS

Delivered in the Temperance Hall, Halifax, on Thursday, February 23, 1854, by the Rev. J. M. CRAMP, D. D., G. W. P. of the Sons of Temperance of the Province of Nova Scotia.

GENTLEMEN—

The delegates composing the Temperance Convention, who have been sent to this city from every part of the Province, in order to adopt such measures as shall tend to secure the enactment of a Prohibitory Liquor Law, have unanimously resolved that the law required must prohibit the importation, manufacture, and sale of intoxicating liquors of all kinds, except for certain purposes, to be distinctly provided for. It is now my duty to present to you a statement of the principles on which this demand is founded, and of the reasonings by which it is sustained.

I observe, in the first place, that *the use of intoxicating liquors is extensively injurious to society.*

Thirty years ago, it would have been necessary to argue the point. It is not necessary now. It is now universally acknowledged that no healthy man stands in need of these liquors—that they stimulate, but do not nourish—that their habitual use produces many diseases, aggravates all diseases, and in innumerable instances prevents the possibility of cure—and that tens of thousands die every year in consequence. It is now universally confessed, that the habitual use of these liquors stupifies the intellect, hardens the heart, destroys all delicacy of feeling, and reduces the victim below the level of the brute.

Take a single case. Yonder goes a miserable man, besotted, befooled by strong drink. Listen to his incoherent ravings. See the children mocking at him as he attempts to thread his crooked course along, or struggles ineffectually in his kindred gutter. What sight so melancholy, so humiliating?

That man has children at home—and a wife, whom long ago he promised to love and to cherish. Why does that wife now shudder at his approach? Why do his children run and hide themselves? It was not

so once. Strong drink has done the mischief. It has turned the husband and father into a demon. He is a man no more.—Natural affection has died out of him. The lion will provide for its mate;—the tiger will take care of its young;—but the drunkard abandons both, and gives the price of their bread to the rum-seller, while the wife pines away in wretchedness, and the children, half clad, squalid, dirty, ignorant and uncontrolled, are rising up to be outcasts and pests in society, and probably future inmates of the jail.

That man had character;—it is lost. He had friends;—they disown him. He enjoyed comforts;—they are handed over to the keeper of the groggery. He possessed health;—it is fast failing. He was once happy;—happiness has long since fled.—Hope then encouraged him;—but all now is a cheerless blank. His body is corrupted; his mind is a wreck; he is hastening down to ruin—a lost man—lost in both worlds.

This is the case of myriads of the human race in all countries. Wherever we turn our eyes we see strong drink in connection with misery, suffering, and evil of every kind. What is it that sinks the proprietor into a tenant? What is it that sinks the tenant into a labourer? What is it that sinks the labourer into a pauper? What is it that cheats children out of their inheritances? What is it that dashes many a noble ship against the rocks, hurling passengers and crew into eternity? Perhaps some of yourselves remember the officer who left this harbour in charge of a government vessel, and never returned to it, he and all his crew, (*they were all drunk*), being lost with the vessel, within a few hours after their departure. How many similar losses, involving the destruction of an immense amount of property, are continually occurring, from the same cause—justifying the observation made

some years ago by Capt. Brenton, when giving his evidence before the Committee on Drunkenness, that "spirits are more dangerous than gunpowder!" From what quarter may we not summon witnesses? Are they military or naval officers? They assure us that, in almost every instance, the disorderly conduct which renders punishment necessary is traceable to the use of intoxicating liquors? Are they merchants, or manufacturers, or builders of palaces or railroads?—They tell us of losses continually sustained by the unsteadiness, negligence, and insubordination of drunken clerks and workmen.—Are they physicians? They describe horrifying cases of delirium tremens, and show us how the cholera, as it passes along from town to town, always sweeps off the drunkards. Are they lawyers? They point to the strong boxes on their shelves, containing title-deeds which once belonged to sober men, and now belong to those whose fire-water maddened them on to ruin. Are they clergymen? They refer to death-beds of anguish and horror inexpressible, and the bitter wailings of penniless widows and orphans—made penniless by the intemperance of their natural protectors. Are they judges? Every charge complains of the increase of crime. Are they juries? Their presentments, year after year, give the same unvarying testimony. Are they officers of police, jailors, governors of lunatic asylums and penitentiaries? They bear witness, as with one voice, that three-fourths of the crime committed in every country, and three-fourths of the pauperism, and consequently of the expenditure incurred by society to punish the one and sustain the other, must be laid to the charge of the bottle and the glass. You build prisons—and intemperance fills them. You establish poorhouses—and they are occupied by the families of inebriates. You erect lunatic asylums—and one-half of their inmates have been prepared for those melancholy abodes by the use of strong drink. What is worse, you license men to sell the brandy, the whiskey, and the rum, and thus secure a continual succession of inhabitants for the prisons, the poor-houses, and the lunatic asylums.

Crime has been mentioned. The worst of all crimes—those springing from the fiercest passions of human nature—and perpetrated

in the most horrible manner, are the fruits of intoxication. Is it an atrocious highway robbery? or the murder of a father by his son—of a son by his father—of a husband or a wife? A thousand to one but alcohol is the exciting cause. It is estimated that in the United States one murder at least is committed every day under the influence of intoxicating drinks.

Government, as the organ of society, cares for the health, the property, the life of every member of the community, and plans and strives to build up a prosperous people. But strong drink is the great obstruction. It stands in the way of all patriotism. It thwarts the best intentions, blasts the brightest hopes, mocks and balks the wisest efforts, and spreads desolation all around. I do not wonder that a German author, writing recently on this subject, has given to his work this title—"*Alcohol is Satan's blood.*" I do not wonder at the expression used by the Swedish peasantry, who, as they go from distillery to distillery, putting out the fires and stopping the work, say to the owners—"You shall make no more *hell-broth.*" "A touching incident," says a Swedish clergyman, in a letter written about four months ago, "has taken place in my neighbourhood. Some poor country people have determined to go on foot to the King (360 miles.) 'We must beg him,' they say, 'to take away the brandy; we are most of us lost drunkards, and when the rich proprietors and farmers force upon us brandy, as payment for our labour, then we have not strength to withstand the temptation.' This thought has occurred to the poor men themselves. Their words seem to me inexpressibly affecting. It is an awakened conscience which cries out loud during the intervals between the fits of intoxication. It begs for mercy and deliverance from the evil. I could weep to hear them."

Let me now proceed to observe, that *legislative enactments for the regulation and control of the sale of intoxicating liquors have proved an entire failure.*

Before entering on this part of the discussion, I will briefly advert to the Temperance reform. The agitation commenced about twenty-nine years ago, and quickly spread through the United States—thence to Great Britain and her Colonies—and afterwards

to almost every part of the civilized world. Beginning with a pledge of abstinence from ardent spirits, the pledge was afterwards extended—and that is its present form—to every kind of intoxicating drink. We bind ourselves by a promise of total abstinence; we labour to induce others to do so—especially those who have fallen under temptation; and we combine for mutual encouragement and aid, and the effective employment of effort. Such is our simple plan of operation.

The object obtained at once the advocacy of a large number of the wise and good, of all classes, and of every variety of thought and profession. Talent, learning, benevolence, and piety, consecrated their energies to the cause, with zeal and perseverance unexampled. True, there has been opposition—for everything good, especially if it wears the appearance of novelty, is sure to be opposed. Ridicule, sarcasm, and argument have been by turns employed. Many have stood aloof, who ought to have given in their adhesion, and the friends of temperance have been sometimes taunted with the quixotic and hopeless nature of the enterprise. But they have held on. And now the Temperance reform is a "great fact," and the Temperance power in the community is a power that cannot be safely slighted. We have been accustomed to hear of the "three Estates" of the realm—the Queen, the Lords, and the Commons; our brethren of the press contend that they constitute a "fourth Estate"—and truly great is the power of the press—its claims may be conceded. The Temperance power may as reasonably be called the "fifth Estate"; it will influence the rest, and ultimately leaven all society.

The success of our endeavours has greatly encouraged us. How many have been restored to themselves—to their families—to their social position? How many more have been turned back, even when they had reached the very edge of the precipice!—How many have been preserved, who would have otherwise fallen! and how delightful is the union of men of all parties, sinking for the time their differences, in order to promote the common good! In our Temperance organizations we admit no recognition of each other's religious or political opinions; but as our respective principles and objects tend to promote the further development of

talent and power in various forms, we avail ourselves of the advantage, and secure the results. The characteristics of differing, and even opposite parties are harmoniously united in this glorious cause. The prudence and caution of one—the dashing energy of another—the business tact of a third, are happily combined. Logic comes from this side, rhetoric from that; here, is enthusiasm; there, is persevering diligence. This honest fellowship is doubtless the great secret of our success. May it ever remain unbroken!

But we are checked, if not disheartened, by the appalling extension of the traffic.—We reclaim one, and the drunkard-manufactories send out two in his place. So powerful is the temptation, and so contagious is the habit, that the establishment of a grogery is inevitably followed by the slaughter of its victims, and the consequent wretchedness of those who are dependent on them.

Contemplating these effects, we cannot but wonder that men bearing the christian name should engage in the traffic—and that they should continue in it after the effects have been ascertained. For those effects are not occasional. They are not accidents, which may or may not occur. They are the natural and necessary results of the traffic in intoxicating drinks. Plant a grog-shop anywhere, and you have founded a nursery of poverty and a school for crime.

All this has long been mournfully evident. What is the proposed remedy? It is license! The sale shall be regulated, controlled, placed under supervision! Now what is this but legalising it—giving it a place and a standing—making it form part of the government arrangements of the country? And be it borne in mind that it is legalizing that which is sure to produce poverty and crime, and to demoralize society. Was it imaginable that by this means the traffic would be lessened? Was this the way to put down drunkenness? As well might you attempt to tie up the whirlwind with a thread, or to put out the light of the sun with an extinguisher! The history of the license system speaks volumes. It demonstrates most clearly and convincingly the futility and folly of the attempt.

No! *The suppression of the traffic in intoxicating liquors, except for manufacturing, mechanical, or medicinal purposes, and for the services of religion, is the only sure*

remedy for the evils with which society is afflicted through the use of those liquors.

If the question of revenue be mooted, it is sufficient to reply, that in this country the amount (from twelve to fifteen thousand pounds annually), is too small to deserve consideration. But were it ten times as much, the argument would not be affected. A heathen monarch may instruct us. When the late Emperor of China was solicited to legalize the sale of opium, and it was suggested that a large revenue would accrue therefrom, he said—"It is true, I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison; gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; *but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vices and misery of my people.*" It may be further observed, that in the event of prohibition, there will be an increase of revenue from other quarters, as more money will be spent on necessary and useful articles, the introduction of which into the country is one of the sources of public income.

In asking for the prohibition of the traffic, we are not bringing forward a new thought. It is no modern innovation. At the settlement of Georgia, nearly 120 years ago, the importation of rum was prohibited, and in order to secure obedience, trade with the West Indies was forbidden. Negro slavery was forbidden at the same time. They were classed together.

In the course of the debates on the Gin Act, in 1743, when the distillers flooded London with their poison, drunkards lay in heaps in the streets, and government was defied by the mob, the celebrated Lord Chesterfield addressed the House of Lords in the following terms:—

"*Luxury*, my Lords, is to be taxed, but *vice* PROHIBITED, let the difficulty in the law be what it will. Would you lay a tax upon a breach of the *ten commandments*? Would not such a tax be wicked and scandalous? Would it not *imply* an *indulgence* to all those who could pay the tax? *Vice*, my lords, is not properly to be taxed, but SUPPRESSED; and heavy taxes are sometimes the only means by which that suppression can be attained. *Luxury*, or that which is only pernicious by its *excess*, may very properly be taxed,—that such

excess, though not strictly unlawful, may be made more difficult. But the use of those things which are simply *hurtful* in their own nature, and in every degree, is to be PROHIBITED. None, my lords, ever heard, in any nation, of a tax upon *theft* or *adultery*, because a tax implies a *license* granted for the use of that which is taxed, to all who are willing to pay for it. Drunkenness, my lords, is universally, and in all circumstances, an EVIL, and therefore ought not to be taxed, but *punished*. The noble lord has been pleased kindly to inform us, that the trade of *distilling* is very extensive—that it employs great numbers—and that they have arrived at exquisite skill—and therefore the trade of distilling is not to be discouraged! Once more, my lords, allow me to wonder at the different conceptions of different understandings. It appears to me that since the spirits which distillers produce are allowed to *enfeeble the limbs, vitiate the blood, pervert the heart, and obscure the intellect*, that the number of distillers should be no argument in their favor,—for I never heard that a law against *theft* was repealed or delayed because thieves were numerous! It appears to me, my lords, that really, if so formidable a body are confederate against the *virtue* or the *lives* of their fellow citizens, it is time to put an end to the *havoc*, and to interpose, whilst it is yet in our power, to stop the *destruction*. So little, my lords, am I affected with the merit of that wonderful skill which distillers are said to have attained, that it is, in my opinion, no faculty of great use to mankind to prepare PALATABLE POISON; nor shall I ever contribute my interest for the reprieve of a *murderer*, because he has, by long practice, obtained great dexterity in his trade. If their liquors are so delicious that the people are tempted to their own destruction, let us, at least, my lords, SECURE them from their *fatal* draught, by *bursting the vials that contain them*. LET US CRUSH AT ONCE THESE ARTISTS IN HUMAN SLAUGHTER, WHO HAVE RECONCILED THEIR COUNTRYMEN TO SICKNESS AND RUIN, AND SPREAD OVER THE PITFALLS OF DEBAUCHERY SUCH BAIT AS CANNOT BE RESISTED!"

In 1833, it was resolved by the American Temperance Union—and the resolution was adopted in various parts of the United States

—"that the traffic in ardent spirits is morally wrong, and ought to be abandoned throughout the world."

A select committee was appointed by the House of Commons on the 3d of June, 1834, on the motion of J. S. Buckingham, Esq., "to inquire into the extent, causes, and consequences of the prevailing vice of intoxication among the labouring classes of the United Kingdom, in order to ascertain whether any legislative measures can be devised to prevent the further spread of so great a national evil." The following passages are extracted from the Report of that Committee:—

"The ultimate and prospective remedies which have been strongly urged by several witnesses, and which *they* think, when public opinion shall be sufficiently awakened to the great national importance of the subject, may be safely recommended, include the following:—

"The absolute prohibition of the importation from any foreign country, or from our own Colonies, of distilled spirits in any shape.

"The equally absolute prohibition of all distillation of ardent spirits from grain, the most important part of the food of man in our own country.

"The restriction of distillation from all other materials, to the purposes of the arts, manufactures and medicine; and the confining the wholesale and retail dealing in such articles to chemists, druggists, and dispensaries alone."

Sufficient evidence has now been produced to show that, in asking for a prohibitory liquor law, we are not bringing forward a novel and unheard-of project.

But it will be asked, "*Is it right to enact a law that will interfere to so great an extent with property?*" Let that question be met by another—"Is the traffic right?" Is it right to sell, for drinking purposes, an article the use of which is followed by such destruction? Is it right for a man to derive his living from that which spreads disease, poverty, and death? Is it right for a man to derive his living from that which debases men's minds and ruins men's souls? Is it right for a man to derive his living from that which destroys for ever the happiness of the domestic circle? Is it right for a man to derive his living from that which brings

upon society three-fourths of the crime and pauperism which distress it? Is it right for a man to derive his living from that which does all this at once, and does it continually?

I have quoted, in substance, the language of Dr. Wayland, President of Brown University. He adds—"If any man think otherwise, and choose to continue it, I have but one word to say. My brother, when you order a cargo of intoxicating drink, think how much misery you are importing into the community. As you store it up, think how many curses you are heaping together against yourself. As you roll it out of your warehouse, think of how many families each cask will ruin. Let your thoughts then revert to your own fire-side, your wife and your little ones; look upward to him who judgeth righteously, and ask yourself, my brother, *IS THIS RIGHT?*"

Nearly a century ago, the great John Wesley, whose authority is justly held in high esteem by many in this assembly, wrote these words:—"The men who traffic in ardent spirit, and sell to all who buy, are poisoners general; they murder his majesty's subjects by wholesale; neither doth their eye pity or spare. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them. The curse of God is on their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell. Blood, blood, is there; the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood."

This is strong language. But it may not be reasonably diluted, unless it can be shown that the facts are not as they are alleged. And that cannot be. The facts are not to be denied. Admit them, and the conclusion follows. That conclusion is, that the traffic, except for the purposes which have been mentioned, is morally wrong.—Now, that cannot be politically expedient or right, which is morally wrong. Consequently, it becomes the duty of the State to interfere and remove the evil.

The right of the State to interfere cannot be fairly questioned. "The right," say the Committee of the House of Commons, to whose Report I have already referred, "The right to exercise legislative interference for the correction of any evil which

affects the public weal cannot be questioned without dissolving society into its primitive elements, and going back from the combined and co-operative state of civilization, with all its wholesome and lawfully-imposed restraints, to the isolated and lawless condition of savage and solitary nature."

Nor can it be fairly alleged that the State has no right to interfere with a man's use of his property. He may use it as he pleases, most certainly, but not so as to injure his neighbour or prejudice the interests of society at large. When that use becomes an injury, a mischief, a nuisance, society interferes and puts a stop to it. This is done continually. Lotteries have been abolished, though once they yielded considerable revenue to the government: they were found injurious to society, and were put down. Gambling houses are declared nuisances. An unwholesome manufacture, established in an inhabited place, is held to be a nuisance, and the proprietor may be compelled to remove it, at whatever inconvenience and cost. Intra-mural cemeteries are now regarded as nuisances, and the State shuts them up. Whatever a man does, that is proved to be annoying to his neighbours, or detrimental to their property or health, he may be forcibly prevented from continuing to do, by the strong arm of the law. When the cholera was raging in the city of Washington, the authorities passed the following resolution:—"Resolved, That the vending of ardent spirits, in whatever quantity, is considered a nuisance, and, as such, is hereby directed to be discontinued for the space of 90 days from this date." In the opinion of some, this was a high-handed interference with private rights; but the necessity of the case justified it, for the authorities had discovered that ardent spirits were to the cholera as fuel to the fire. The only wonder is, that they were not induced, by the good effects of the measure, to declare the vending of ardent spirits a perpetual nuisance. Their successors, I am happy to say, are preparing to do it now.

The following decision of the Chief Justice of the State of Maine, which was concurred in by the full bench, places the matter in a clear and satisfactory point of view:

"The State, by its legislative enactments,

operating prospectively, may determine that articles injurious to the public health or morals shall not constitute property, within its jurisdiction. It may come to the conclusion that spirituous liquors, when used as a beverage, are productive of a great variety of ills and evils to the people, both in their individual and social relations. That the least use of them for such a purpose is injurious, and suited to produce, by a greater use, serious injury to the comfort, morals, and health; that the common use of them for such a purpose, operates to diminish the productiveness of labor; to injure the health; to impose upon the people additional and unnecessary burdens; to produce waste of time and of property; to introduce disorder and disobedience to law; to disturb the peace, and to multiply crimes of every grade. Such conclusions would be justified by the experience and history of man. *If a Legislature should declare that no person should acquire any property in them, for such a purpose, THERE WOULD BE NO OCCASION FOR ANY COMPLAINT THAT IT HAD VIOLATED ANY PROVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION.*"

Another question is anxiously asked—*Is it practicable?* It may be answered by an appeal to facts. In the youngest-born of civilized nations (the Sandwich Islands) the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits were prohibited by law more than twenty years ago, under a heavy penalty, and the prohibition remains in full force. When permission was asked to sell to foreigners only, not to natives, the Governor's reply was, "To horses, cattle, and hogs you may sell rum, but to real men you must not on these shores." The sale of intoxicating liquors is prohibited in the State of Maine. It is prohibited in Vermont. It is prohibited in Rhode Island. It is prohibited in Massachusetts. It is prohibited in Michigan. It is prohibited in the Territory of Minnesota. It will soon be prohibited in the State of New York, in Pennsylvania, and in New Jersey. The Southern States are waking up. The Western States are roused. In a few years time the "Maine Liquor Law" will become a "United States Liquor Law," and that vast country will be delivered from the abomination of the traffic. The deliverance will be shortly accomplished in Canada (I know some of the Temperance men of that Prov-

ince—they are resolute, persevering men—and they will not be balked), and in New Brunswick. Shall it not be simultaneously accomplished here?

As to the practicability and effect of the measure, take the Hon. Neil Dow's testimony, given at the last Annual Meeting of the American Temperance Union.

"You may go up and down the State of Maine, and not find a place where liquors are exposed for sale. The wholesale trade in Maine stopped instantly, upon the passage of this law."

I may remark here, that one of the distillers, whose establishment was thus closed was afterwards so pleased with the beneficial operation of the law, that he declared, if he had ten distilleries, each worth \$10,000, he would willingly give them up, to secure such excellent results. That man deserves a niche in the temple of Fame!

Let us hear Mr. Dow further. "*The retail trade is now as disreputable as picking pockets or stealing sheep.* An action for libel would lie against a man for calling another 'rumseller,' as quickly as for the other. Intemperance ceased almost immediately, and the begging and wretchedness consequent upon it. They fined the rumseller instead of the drunkard, and filled the lock-ups, of which there are eighteen in Portland, which were full under the old law, with barrels and demijohns, instead of men. Every respectable man quit the business when it became unlawful."

It may be said that Mr. Dow is a partisan, and that he will necessarily speak in favour of his own scheme. We can obtain information from other quarters.

Do you ask, what have been the effects of the law in reference to *crime*? Crime has been reduced 38 per cent in Lowell, 30 per cent in Springfield, and even three-fourths in some other places. At Burlington, and other places in Vermont, the jails have been emptied.

Does your inquiry relate to *pauperism*? At Portland, the amount levied for the relief of the poor has been lowered from five dollars to one—or in that proportion.

Do you ask about *industry*? The contractors on the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad inform us that whereas before the passing of the law they could not rely on

more than two-thirds of any given number of men, because the remainder would be away drinking, they can now depend on from 45 to 48 out of 50.

Is *taxation* the object of inquiry? At Fairfield, Maine, a town of 2400 inhabitants, there were eighteen dram-shops. Fourteen of them were closed as soon as the law went into operation; the constables used their peculiar methods of persuasion in closing the others. And now for the fruits. The pauper-tax has been reduced from \$1100 to \$300. And what have the men of Fairfield done with this saving? They have added \$600 to their school-fund. The people of Fairfield are "wise in their generation."

Once more. Is it asked, what have been the effects on *peace and order*? The experience of the town of Augusta may be adduced. The police of that town used to be called out a hundred nights in the year. In six months after the law taking effect, they had not been called out once.

At Agricultural Associations, and public gatherings in general, intemperance formerly prevailed to a great extent. Governor Wright of Indiana attended the last State Fair in Vermont, and expressed his great surprise that during the two days of the fair he had not seen one man drunk. How was that? The Vermont Liquor Law had recently taken effect.

These few cases are specimens of hundreds of the like kind that might have been produced.

We do not say that the race of drunkards will be altogether abolished by a prohibitory liquor law. We do not say that there will not be found men determined to perpetuate that race, at all risk, whatever it may cost, and whatever ruin it may bring down upon their fellow creatures. We do not say that rum will not find its way into certain holes and corners, and that depraved beings will not creep into those holes and corners to drink it—even as thieves and murderers perpetrate their deeds of infamy under cover of the darkness. But we do say that, it will be a great thing to drive intoxicating liquors into concealment, and to make it disgraceful to use them. As one has justly remarked—

"Take away the lawfulness of the traffic, and that moment its respectability goes along with it."

Take away the lawfulness of the traffic, and that moment its morality deserts it.

Take away the lawfulness of the traffic, and that instant its guilt and criminality become strangely apparent.

Take away the lawfulness of the traffic, and the outlawed vender holds rank with the smuggler in an illicit trade."

It has been said that we are not prepared for the law, and that, if passed, it will not be kept. I deny the fact—and I repel the insinuation. Temperance men have been long prepared, and, as has been already observed, they are no insignificant power in the community. Pass the law, and you will at once find a people prepared to carry it out through all its issues. Those who are indifferent now will take their stand by the law then, because *it is* law. A bad law cannot be sustained: but who will dare to say that a Prohibitory Liquor Law is a bad law? Who will venture to plead for drunkard-manufactories? Who will be so far forgetful of himself, and so lost to all sense of honour and right as to maintain that it is a violation of freedom to deprive a man of the power of impoverishing and ruining his neighbour—body and goods—mind and heart—for time and eternity? No! All honourable and true-hearted men will proclaim it a good law, and will watch over it and secure its observance. I have not so mean an opinion of the people of Nova Scotia as to fear a contrary result.

This, Gentlemen, is our case. We maintain, that the use of intoxicating liquors is extensively injurious to society—that the attempt to regulate and control the sale of those liquors by legislative enactments has proved an utter failure—and that the suppression of the traffic, except for certain specified purposes, is the only sure remedy.

Gentlemen of the Legislature,—petitions for the suppression of this traffic are about to be presented to you, containing upwards of thirty thousand signatures of the people of Nova Scotia; and we could tell you of many thousands more, who, though their names are not appended to the petitions, desire from their inmost souls the success of the cause. The petitioners are of all ranks, and of every profession calling, and religious denomination in the province. Among them are many drunkards, who, while they

confess their inability to resist the temptation, will hail the passage of the law as the harbinger of their deliverance. Some of them are actually engaged in the traffic. So general is the desire for a prohibitory law, that in some places only one in ten, in others only one in twenty-five have declined to sign the petitions. There has not been shown such unanimity before in this country, on any subject whatever. These, then, are the petitions of *the people*—not of a few, nor of the minority. We are assured that nine-tenths of the adult population of Nova Scotia are in favour of the proposed law. Public opinion was never so loudly, so generally expressed. Surely, the old adage is now verified—*vox populi, vox Dei*:—we trust that you will reverently obey.

This is not the first time your interference has been sought. Again and again have the friends of Temperance entreated you to interpose—though as yet without success. We approach you once more—in greater numbers—and in full confidence that we shall at length prevail. The request we prefer is no selfish one. We ask for no grant of public money;—we ask for no favour—no monopoly—no exclusive rights—no preference over others. But we ask you to do a patriotic deed;—to free your country from an intolerable nuisance;—to hear the prayers of the wretched ones who implore your aid;—and to promote the health and happiness of the people, the general prosperity of the country, and the interests of knowledge, morality, and religion, by giving the sanction of law to a measure which is as just as it is generous,—which will benefit all, and do harm to none.

What is our desire for Nova Scotia and its inhabitants? We long to see our country freed, wholly freed from the bondage and curse of intemperance:—her statesmen, and judges, and magistrates, free—her halls of legislation and her civic councils, free—her clergy, and physicians, and lawyers, free—her merchants, free—her yeomen, and all the people, free—all free!

And that this our desire may be accomplished, we ask you, Gentlemen, to grant the prayer of the petitions which will be presented to you, and to give the country a *sound, unmistakeable, efficacious PROHIBITORY LIQUOR LAW.*

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